



Dakshineswar Kali Temple on the banks of the Hooghly River

A Cruise through History along the Hooghly Kolkata and Bengal, Northeast India

8 – 19 February 2021

*“Splendid hotel, fascinating boat trip and some
interesting off-beat visits.”*

David Forsyth, A Cruise Through History Along the Hooghly River, March 2017



Jon Baines
tours



Katgola Palace

The Hooghly River is the main artery running through the history of Bengal. Kolkata was founded on the banks of the river in 1690 as a British trading outpost of the Mughal Empire. Not only was Kolkata the centre of the Raj until 1911 - when the capital moved to Delhi, in a move that shocked Bengal at the time - but it has long been a hub of Bengali literature, music and philosophy. Bengal was the richest province in India for a time, its lush soil producing indigo, opium and rice crops, among others, and its exquisite textiles were known as 'woven wind'.

This progressive, wealthy and cultured land drew people from all over the world - the Portuguese, Dutch, Danish and French all settled on the banks of the Hooghly and Islam, Hinduism, Jainism and Christianity all flourished here. The long history of this province leaves a legacy of magnificent temples, buildings and parks, often of astonishing size. A visit to Kolkata combined with a cruise along the mighty Hooghly offers an unparalleled vision of the rich history and culture of the great province of Bengal. Tour leaders John and Susi Richardson will share their wide knowledge and personal family connections with India.

Tour Leaders

Dr John Richardson is Emeritus Defence Professor of Primary Care and General Practice. He has led study tours worldwide and was a medical escort to parties of veterans on journeys of remembrance for the Royal British Legion. He has also run many history of medicine battlefield tours. He has visited more than 80 countries and worked in 41 of them as a doctor. John has previously led tours for Jon Baines to China, Central Asia, India, Turkey, Central America, Ecuador and the Galapagos, Namibia, Ethiopia, Indo-China and Burma. He has also given lectures on cruises.

Susi Richardson has travelled widely across the world either as an expedition nurse, or as a nurse on war grave pilgrimages for the Royal British Legion, co-tour leader for Jon Baines Tours, or accompanying her husband on his British Army medical officer postings. Five generations of her Shakespear family served in India on her grandmother's side,



and three generations of Cooke family on her grandfather's side, covering almost continuously two hundred years of the history of British India in a variety of roles and occupations.

John and Susi have led and lectured on previous cruises up the Hooghly and the Brahmaputra

“John and Susi – tour leaders extraordinaire!... Always wonderfully cheerful, well organized and helpful as always. Truly great leaders.”

Jan and Gavin Fabinyi, Assam and Brahmaputra Cruise, 2018



The flower market, Kolkata

3 nights Kolkata – 7 nights cruising on Hooghly River – 1 night Kolkata



Day 1: Kolkata (Mon, 8 Feb) **D**

- Am:** Arrive and transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel and at leisure.
- Pm:** Optional stroll along the Colonnade to visit the Park Street Oxford Bookstore and the Museum of India. In the evening board the boat at Prinsep's Steps for a river trip through the city. Susi Richardson will talk on the early history of Kolkata and on the Thackeray and Shakespear families.

Day 2: Kolkata (Tues, 9 Feb) **B D**

- Am:** Optional early morning sightseeing walk through old Kolkata, including the Writer's Building. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then visit the Victoria Memorial and the Maidan.

- Pm:** Visit the Anglican Cathedral, Park Street Cemetery, the office of Warren Hastings and St John's Church, where Susi Richardson's family have held four weddings. Susi will give a talk on her family's early history in Kolkata that afternoon. Visit the Mission Church. Return to hotel for time at leisure before dinner.

Day 3: Kolkata (Wed, 10 Feb) **B D**

- Am:** Visit the flower market and Kumatali, the pottery village. See Bazar Rajabari Tagore House and museum, the Marble Palace, and the double courtyarded palace on both sides of the road of Raja Nabakrishna Deb (1733-97) in Shobabazar.
- Pm:** Continue the tour of the Bengali palaces of North Calcutta and the Tipoo Sultan Mosque, or at leisure at the hotel and pool.
- Eve:** Dinner at Zaranj local restaurant.

Day 4: Kolkata / Cruising (Thur, 11 Feb) **B D**

- Am:** Make a late morning transfer to the river and board the ABN Rajmahal to commence your cruise on the Hooghly.
- Pm:** Sail past the old Danish colony of Serampore to Barrackpore and disembark. Take a walk through the cantonment past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff House and its garden.



The Victoria Memorial, Kolkata (photo by Susi Richardson)

Day 5: Cruising (Fri, 12 Feb)

B L D

Am: Sail onto Chandernagore, which was a French possession until 1950, and visit the eighteenth century church and Duplex's house and museum.

Pm: Sail on past the old Dutch settlement of Chinsura. Disembark to visit the imposing Imambara at Hooghly. Reboard your ship and cruise upstream, leaving Kolkata's urban sprawl behind, while John Richardson gives a talk on *HMS Shannon and the Great Uprising*.

Day 6: Cruising (Sat, 13 Feb)

B L D

Am: Disembark at Kalna and take cycle rickshaws to see some of Bengal's most attractive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temple with concentric rings made up of 108 shrinelets.

Pm: Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur, its skyline dominated by the vast new ISKCON temple, before sailing on through the night. This afternoon's talk by John Richardson is on the Battle of Plassey. Sail on through the night to a mooring near Matiari.

Day 7: Cruising (Sun, 14 Feb)

B L D

Am: Disembark at the brassworking village of Matiari, where you can watch the traditional process of beating out brass water pots and other vessels.

Pm: Cruise to the battlefield of Plassey where in 1757 Clive's defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah changed the course of Indian history. Moor for the night close to Murshidabad.

Eve: Discussion about William Dalrymple's book, *Anarchy*, with John and Susi Richardson.

Day 8: Cruising (Mon, 15 Feb)

B L D

Am: Disembark and walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Moghul-style garden enclosing the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah and his family. Continue a little way upstream to where the great Hazarduari Palace dominates the waterfront. Inside is an

extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects.

Pm: Visit the great Katra Mosque and drive out to two classic Georgian merchant buildings of the late 18th century, the Nashipara Palace and the Katgola Palace. Back onboard hear John Richardson talk about *The Wolf Boys*.

Day 9: Cruising (Tues, 16 Feb)

B L D

Am: Moor at the sleepy village of Baranagar, rural India at its most idyllic. Walk through fields to visit three beautiful miniature terracotta temples.

Pm: Return to the ship and continue up the Hooghly, here a charming waterway twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards. Carry on up a long canal section to a mooring close to the Farakka Barrage and overnight.

Day 10: Cruising (Wed, 17 Feb)

B L D

Am: Disembark and take a full day excursion by road to Gaur, near the town of Malda. This quiet, deserted place was once one of India's great cities, first under the Hindus in 12th century, then as the Muslim capital of Eastern India from the 14th to the 16th century. Visit the remains of mosques, palaces and gateways before rejoining the ship in the evening.

Day 11: Cruising / Kolkata (Thur, 18 Feb)

B L D

Am: Transfer to Farraka Station for a scenic four hour train journey back to Kolkata.

Pm: Spend the rest of the day at leisure before a farewell dinner in the evening. Transfer to the airport the next day or extend your stay in Kolkata.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 12: Kolkata (Fri, 19 Feb)

B

Am: Transfer to the airport or extend at the Oberoi Grand Hotel or a palace hotel.



ABN Rajmahal on the Hooghly

The ABN Rajmahal

The ABN Rajmahal contains 22 air-conditioned cabins, all of which have French balconies and en suite bathrooms. There is a spa, a saloon with a library and a spacious sundeck at the very top. The décor is stylish and fresh with touches of colonial elegance, brought to life by traditional Indian-inspired designs on hand-blocked cotton fabrics. Food on board is a mixture of Assamese (milder than most Indian cuisine) and continental. Wines, beer and spirits are available.

“Food on cruise excellent, chef took a pride in the food and came to talk to us at each meal.”

Daniel and Barbara Hawgood, A Cruise Through History Along the Hooghly River, March 2017



The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata

Fondly known as the Grand Dame of Kolkata, the luxury Oberoi Grand is centrally located, near bustling markets and cultural landmarks. Dating back to the late 1880s, The Oberoi Grand was frequented by the country’s leading figures during colonial times and even today hosts grand functions for Heads of State in the city’s largest pillarless Grand Ballroom.



The Rajmahal lounge (top); A double cabin;
The Oberoi Hotel (above)



A ferry on the way to market in Kalna (top); The terracotta Shiva temples at Kalna; A brassworker in Matiari; Sunset on the Hooghly (photo by Susi Richardson) (above)

The cost for the tour is USD \$4,855 per person sharing

The cost includes:

- UK tour leaders (Professor John and Susi Richardson)
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- 4 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in a first class hotel (Oberoi Kolkata)
- 7 nights' accommodation in twin or double bedded cabin on the cruise ship

The single room supplement is USD \$1,036*

- Meals as per the itinerary (half board Kolkata, full board cruising)
- Water
- All transport and transfers
- A full programme of visits and talks as per the itinerary
- Admission fees and tips

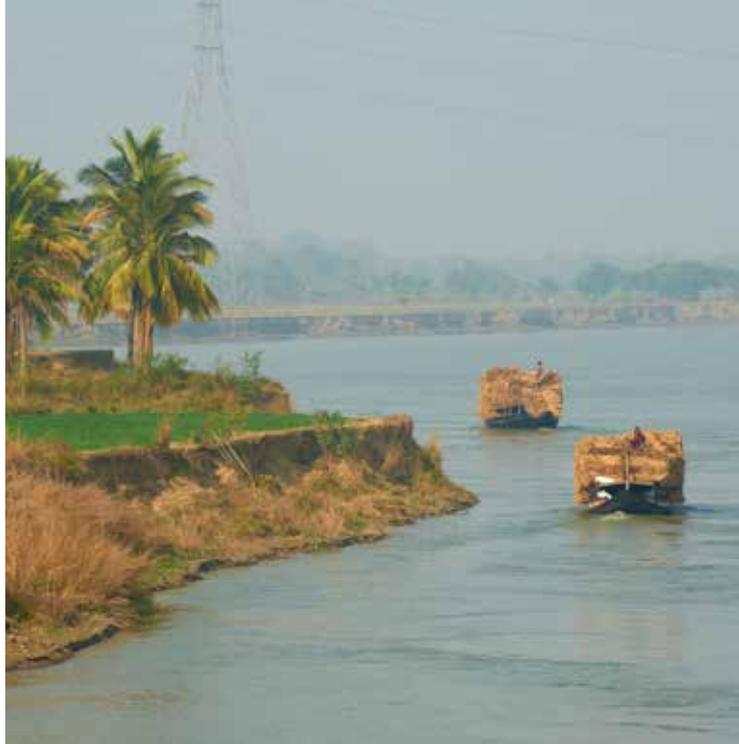
* Please note there are limited numbers of single cabins available.

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned
- Alcoholic drinks and drinks from the bar on the cruise
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, portage
- International flights* and airport transfers

* Please contact us for assistance in organising international flights, transfers and additional accommodation if required

Transporting rice straw along the Hooghly



About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.



The Kolkata flower market (photo by Jan and Gavin Fabinyi) (top);
Hazarduari Palace; Boy washing water buffalo on the river;
Howrah Bridge on the Hooghly (above)

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